

**Florida's Request To Assume Administration of a Clean Water Act Section 404 Program
(85 FR 57853, September 16, 2020) EPA-HQ-OW-2018-0640**

Code 16 Request for Extension

More Time Is Needed Due to COVID-19

Commenters said that, due to the stressors of the COVID-19 pandemic, more time is needed in order to fully comment on the state's proposal (0124, 0057, 0134, 0421, 0519). Commenters (0057, 0421, 0519) specifically requested a minimum extension of 180 days due to the current public health crisis. One of those commenters (0057), also cited the November 2020 general election as a reason to extend public feedback. The commenter (0057) also noted that the state took two years to write the proposal, and that delaying the process by a few more months in order to hold additional webinar hearings would be justified.

More Time Is Needed for the Hearing Process

Two commenters argued that the hearing process should be postponed, but did not cite the COVID-19 pandemic as a reason. One commenter (0367) requested an extension of 180 days so that the public could meaningfully respond to the proposal.

Commenter (0386) said that the current application is incomplete because the public has neither been given full access to the application materials, nor been given an appropriate amount of time to respond to the proposal. This commenter recommended that EPA deny the application unless more time is given for public review.

The Public Needs More Access to the State of Florida's Application

Commenters believed that the public has not been given adequate access to the state of Florida's application materials. One of these commenters (0051) believed that EPA should either suspend public comment to ensure that the state's proposal is complete, or extend the public review period until all the application materials are provided to the public by the state.

Commenter (0075, 0075, 0346) argued that the state should release its full application materials and that a 45-day comment period should reopen afterwards to ensure public engagement with the complete proposal. The commenter specifically requested that the Biological Opinion and Incidental Take Statement be made public because they are critical aspects of the state's proposal that impact at-risk species in the state.